Understanding Superpower- Regional Power Relations in the Post Cold War Scenario: A Case Study of the United States and India, 2000-2016.

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INTRODUCTION

International politics predominantly develops in the ways actors in the international system act, unilaterally or in relation to others. The unilateral action often proceeds and modifies with consideration to its bi-lateral or multilateral engagements. Interactions and engagements in varying degrees form the basic criterion for a state to forward its own intentions towards achieving or serving its interests within a system where others are also striving to fulfill theirs. Thus, in a system where varied interests may collide and conflict comes the question of power capabilities of a state. In simple understandable terms greater the power capabilities more is the scope of a state to influence or maneuver its ways over others while lesser capable states with limited resources under such circumstances develop alternative means to achieve their interests and also to respond to the presence of greater powers. In an interdependent globalized world a state irrespective of its global or regional reach necessarily engages with others not only for its survival but also for growth, expansion of influence and integration into the structures and institutions of international politics. Behaviour of a state is largely determined by its position inthe international system and this position is affected by interactions between it and the power concentration in the international order.

This research looks into the dynamics of interaction between a superpower that maintains an international system and regional powers that are attempting to achieve a major power status within the same international system. The work considers the international order that developed after the end of the Cold war with the U.S as the predominant power. This superpower constructed a world order, established norms and principles that assures benefits to others and responds to global challenges. A regional power is understood as one that has considerable power to exercise a degree of autonomy, a desire to achieve higher status and wants to modify or influence the established order to forward indigenous interests apart from being dominant in its own region. The power asymmetry, difference over strategic objectives will inform their interests and what sort of engagement they will seek to further such interests.

Interactions are dealt as strategies adopted by the superpower and the regional power to engage with each other and to attain their strategic interests.

In international relations the work on strategies like balancing or bandwagoning are discussed as responses of secondary states to power preponderance or threat perception. I have used these strategies as „engagement strategies" having broader scope beyond being restricted as response to threat perception. Engagement strategies should be treated as enabling strategies that will assist non-leading states, specifically regional powers with desire to achieve greater status to not only manage their relations with superpower but also as means to forward niche interests.

Engagement strategies can also be applied by superpowers to enhance its acceptability, influence or modify non-confirmative elements and strengthen its dominance. I have posited the relation between India and the United States within the framework of superpower regional power ambit and have analyzed the various engagement strategies that can be applied to balance the convergences and divergences in their strategic understanding and approach and to promote specific objectives. A systematic understanding by considering various strategies of engagement will help to redefine the contours of superpower regional power relations in the international system in terms of their differing interests and objectives.

The Positioning of Indo-U.S relations

The United States and India both were former colonies of the British Empire and have a history of freedom struggle. The initial foreign policy ideas for both the states were formulated in consonance of larger big power conflict in the international system (the European crisis for U.S and the Cold war for India) and a commonality of thought could be traced in the idea of preserving the newly found independent status by keeping away from big power. It is undeniable that India and the U.S formulated such policies within very different time and context and for India the power conflict it was trying to shield itself from had the United States as a major player. Nonetheless the initial idea as outlined in United States Monroe Doctrine and India's Non- Alignment is motivated by the similar logic that the interest of a newly independent state will be best served by avoiding getting embroiled in great power conflicts.

While for the Americans the realization of distinct national interest from their colonial masters was rooted mainly in economic and trade benefits while for India it was mostly concerned with attaining political freedom. Rooted in America's struggle against British

imperialism was its disdain towards imperialism however, soon after it attained independence U.S initiated an expansionist policy to ensure its rise through the creation of superordinate power relative to one's adversaries and this has remained the goal of U.S strategy over the years. Its inconsistency in opposing imperialism or its traits raises the question to its commitment to the cause, "United States in fact did not pursue an unchanging opposition to empire when it came to the empires of other nations or a potential empire of its own.(Appleman 1980; McMohan, 2001) Anti- imperialism has been one of the foundational principles of Indian foreign policy and wanted to project itself as a vehement supporter of anti-colonial struggle. The British efforts to expand economic and political influence and prevent European encroachment in India led to the construction of an India centric regional system. This idea remained with independent India and contributed to its entitlement in the region. A sense of entitlement can be noticed in both, one being surrounded by the idea of manifest destiny while the other despite being a smaller power harped on being the moral harbinger of democracy and freedom in the region. This sense of entitlement informed America's policy of defining its interest in terms of world order. India's sense of entitlement is rooted in its aspiration and claim over major power status and also exhibited in its stress on maintaining strategic autonomy in foreign policy decision making. India and U.S present the system induced difference of power positions and the subsequent strategic imperatives of being superpower and regional power. Along with this they differ over the very ideas that inform their strategic understanding and what they seek in the international order.

Indo-U.S relations over the years have exhibited constraints, divergences even in their attempts of engagement and cooperation. The United States in order to maintain its newly found status needed to forgo its containment policies and initiate engagements across regions and to build an integrated international system conducive to its interests. India, bereft of its ally and financial crisis, modified its policies together with the realization that with the end of great power conflict it no longer needed to shield itself and it could work towards attaining its desired major power status by larger participation in the international system.

Thus United States motive to establish a conducive international system with maintaining influence over various regions preferably through alliances stands in much contrast to India's quest to attain a major power status with considerable strategic freedom to pursue

niche policies and further its distinct identity within the structural constraints induced by an international system dominated by one power.

They differ in their understanding of the very concept of engagement and when they do identify common interests to cooperate they differ in approaches or ultimate objectives. Conflict between a regional power attempting to assert major power status and the established superpower trying to limit or constrain that effort is natural but when they have intermingling interests, cooperation on some issues are essential to both at some level, they identify each other as strategic partners and the superpower supports the rise of the regional power then it alters the range of actions each side can undertake in pursuit of its objectives. The ultimate objective of the United States for Indo – U.S relations will always be concerned about how it assists in preserving the American primacy. For India the motivation is to remain in a beneficial relation with the dominant power to accrue material resources and international status to become a major power on its own terms. It is here where engagement strategies are to be adopted and utilized by both powers and what strategies are adopted to what objectives will enhance our understanding of Indo-U.S relations and superpower regional power relations in the larger context.

Objectives of the research

The research will address three principal objectives

(a) To construct a framework based on major engagement strategies between a superpower and regional power.

(b) To posit the Indo-U.S relations in the post-cold war era within such a framework to underline a systematic understanding of the convergences and divergences on interests and approaches.

(c) To identify what form or forms of engagement will be more plausible or befitting.

Research Questions

1. How to understand the relation between US and India within the ambit of superpower regional power relations?

2. Where is India posited in United States‟ broader strategic vision of the international order?

3. How is engagement with United States perceived within India‟s strategic understanding of the world?

4. What are the interests that make engagement plausible?

5. Considering convergences and divergences over interests what forms of engagement strategies will be more adoptable?

A brief discussion of the chapters

Chapter 1: Understanding Indo US relations: Engagements of a superpower and a regional power

This chapter deals with the theoretical understanding of the concept of power in international relations, the measurement of power and various engagement strategies. It also posits the U.S as the superpower and India as the regional power and their relation to state what necessitates their interactions and how those interactions will make them choose different engagement strategies.

Then I have framed the United States within the superpower parameter and India within the regional power parameter to underline the distinctiveness they add to the general idea of superpower and regional power. What is distinctive in an international system with U.S as the sole superpower than those under erstwhile great powers is United States preponderance over all spheres of power and its strategy to build an international order that not only secures its interests but assures benefits to others within the system. It has equated its own interests with that of the world order as asserted by Layne & Schwarz (1993).

India has the needed power capabilities and influence as a regional power but often its regional leadership has been doubted over its inability to influence regional affairs on its own and its limited acceptability amongst smaller powers of the region. (Ingersoll & Frazier,2010). India's claim to global status is rooted in the region but embraces extended areas to exert the notion of its expanding influence beyond South Asia. India must be viewed as transcending the region and acquiring a larger presence which is predominantly motivated by its desire to be recognized as a great power for which it is often labeled as an emerging power and added with it are its stress on strategic autonomy, building niche Asian security structure and a multipolar emancipatory world order.

To construct a framework of understanding relation between a superpower and a regional power is based on the proposition that United States prime motive will be to retain its primacy and to forward such strategies in the international order and in its various engagements with other states that will help to strengthen its dominance. While India being motivated to claim aglobal status will try assert its indigenous norms and ideas and be able to address existing problems of the international order or bring about desired changes.

Despite the difference they need to engage

(a) The United States has strategic interest in the South Asian region. Thus interactions with India as the predominant state are almost unavoidable.

(b) India strives to maintain its preponderance in the region with limited external influence. In its quest for recognition and semblance on a larger international platform necessitates its integration with the superpower but at the same time it strives to maintain its autonomy in actions.

(c) Both of them strive to achieve political, economic and strategic interests in the regional context and in alignments with global interests which may converge or diverge over issue areas.

In their quest for engagement they will adopt various strategies that I will underline as engagement strategies. The chapter defines the theoretical understanding of various strategies and the concepts of alliance, alignments and entente. The application of engagement strategies will further define whether the relation can be analyzed under the concept of alliance, alignments or entente.

Chapter II, Strategic world view of the United States: India's position and Strategic considerations

This chapter tries to understand the strategic worldview of the United States and to trace how India is positioned within it. The objective of the chapter is to outline the changes or continuity in America's strategic viewpoint, essentially stressing on the post-cold war period. The chapter underlines the transformation to mark continuity of certain ideas and changes in other. The post- cold war period is dealt in two parts, firstly, it discusses the various contending U.S foreign policy schools as they developed their own arguments regarding preservation of American power, Secondly, it deals with the post- cold war administrations and how they have perceived and acted on American strategic worldview. It considers five competing grand strategies Primacy, neo-isolationism, selective engagement, liberalism and offshore balancing and analyzes their core objective, means, threat perceptions etc. to understand how different approaches seek to uphold American Primacy.

The successive administrations protected and promoted American primacy through its policy choices. The administrations stressed that the rise of any rival power even at regional level that aspires to a larger role and seeks to challenge or alter the established order must be deterred however, there seems to be a shift towards a policy of accommodation or absorption from the second term of Bush administration and the Obama administration.

India has never been a part of the American alliance system or any of its security pacts, the two most common and trusted aspects of being an American ally. India has vociferously opposed the

U.S conceived grand new world architecture of the nonproliferation regime and even tested nuclear weapons by going against it. It has strong aspirations of becoming a major power and raises serious disagreements with several international norms promoted by the U.S. Thus U.S optimally should resist the rise of a power that disagrees over established norms but successive American administrations are formally supporting India's rise raising a crucial question about structural conflict. A superpower can only assist or support the rise of a regional power only if it bestows a substantial addition to its capabilities or is important to realize any of its essential strategic interests India's position within U.S strategic worldview is dealt in such perspective and U.S strategic engagements with India in the Post cold war

scenario can be understood in the following lines

I. In terms of larger global considerations of policies of the United States. As in the case of its global war on terror which not only rested on the notion of coalition of the willing but India was also a part of the region. Similarly the pivot to Asia policy of the Obama administration which was directed towards aligning all states of the Asia Pacific region to form a multilateral coalition to be led mainly by American initiatives and India was perceived as part of the greater strategy to share the responsibility of maintaining stability in the region.

II. In case of crisis, instability that could jeopardize greater American strategic goals. This exhibits a dual motive, India needs to be engaged to avoid any crisis that can undermine U.S interests and on the other hand India needs to be engaged to assist U.S in maintaining stability in the region.

III. To deter a potential rival in the region. Though Washington or New Delhi has never acknowledged China as a common threat but U.S seems to be engaging with India to ensure a system of checks and balances that will be influenced by Washington but will appear as regionally induced balancing towards a greater threat.

IV. U.S wants to bind India's rise within its own parameters. The imperative of support from U.S administrations for India's rise may be deciphered as the strategy of binding the rising power within its desired perimeters by being accommodative and entwining it in various initiatives designed by the superpower itself.

Chapter III, Engagements with the United States and India's Strategic Understanding

This chapter tries to understand India's strategic worldview and United States position in it. India is depicted as a regional power driven by its aspiration to achieve major power status. I have defined India's strategic objectives, foreign policy and its understanding of engagement through the lens of its deep rooted aspiration of global role. Its sense of entitlement, civilizational heritage made India claim its leadership role based on soft power even when it had limited material capabilities. (Paul and Nayar,2003:12). India's strategy in the Post cold war system was informed by its desire to attain hard power capabilities, seek

constructive engagements and further its integration in the international system. India was also confronted with a new systematic constraint; the emerging system within which India was seeking its aspiration was governed by a sole superpower whose key aim was to consolidate and perpetuate its position globally and focused on precluding the emergence of any potential rival power.

India's strategic understanding is primarily motivated to achieve the major power role and as an emerging power India stresses on maintaining its strategic autonomy despite the strategic imperatives being much higher under an international system dominated by a superpower. An emerging India believes that an international system with a diffused center of power will reduce structural imperatives and provide the desired strategic flexibility for its rise..

What distinguishes India from other regional powers is that it has never been a part of any alliance system with the United States and has historically espoused the conception of a different international order and it often expresses its disagreements and oppositions with several international norms promoted by the superpower. India in its strive to bring about alteration in the established order acts through two distinct ways,(a) It tries inducing changes in norms and rules by working within the established institutions through negotiations or by building sub-forums with others;(b) to construct and participate in indigenous regional attempts to form new organizations or institutions that can provide alternative approaches to address the concerns. Thus, India should beregarded as a regional power pursuing the major power status with an imperative to change or alter the existing system.

Chapter IV: Areas of engagement: Identifying interests

The last two chapters highlighted the nuances of the strategic worldview of the U.S and India and how they are positioned within each other's larger strategic vision. This chapter highlights four issue areas (nuclear non-proliferation, strategic partnership in Asia & Indian Ocean region, cooperation in Afghanistan and defense cooperation and logistics agreement. where they have engaged prominently to delineate. Despite conjoined efforts to deepen cooperation on areas of common interest they stumble upon the difference over procedural aspects, strategic understanding and most importantly over long term objectives.

I have outlined how the concept of engagement itself is understood very differently by a superpower and a regional power. The term has been connoted in U.S foreign policy as a strategy for modifying the behavior of another state. It is to be applied through non coercive means to less powerful states which are non -confirmative or threaten to disrupt the structure of U.S policies. The terms „target country", „rogue states" or „rival states" have been used to underline the states to which the strategy of engagement can be applied. Limited power and resources often shrink the attractiveness or bargaining power of secondary states or even regional powers. Engagement as a strategy for regional powers or smaller powers works as a means for connecting with relevant major powers and very importantly as a method to develop relations with other smaller powers for bilateral or multilateral cooperation at regional institutional level and that can be extended to forward common interests of developing countries within larger global structures and to guard against its specific vulnerabilities or structural uncertainties.

India and the United States have identified common interests to cooperate but a struggle can be noticed due the inherent difference in strategic understanding that results in divergences over what they want to achieve from the common interests. For instance how the U.S and India have identified their common interest in maintaining the security and stability in Asia Pacific and restraining the rise of Chinese dominion over the region but the ultimate strategic imperative remains different. For U.S the ultimate imperative is to ensure the Asian balance of power remains conducive to maintain the preponderance of an U.S led security order, it is investing and assisting other regional powers like India to maintain the balance. While for India, it definitely would like to maintain an inclusive security framework in Asia free from overt Chinese influence but ultimately it favours the development of indigenous efforts to build a multipolar Asia specific structure with Indian leadership. Thus, to tide over such differences and to ensure the growing partnership they will adopt various engagement strategies and the next chapter will construct a framework of possible strategies.

Chapter V: Analyzing the modes of interaction

This chapter analyzes various modes of interaction or engagement strategies and how they are applied to forward common or specific interests by the United States and India. Special emphasis will be given on what kind of engagement strategies can be adopted by India as an emerging power to balance its relation with the preponderant power and to forward its

indigenous interests. The chapter focuses on two further objectives

a) To identify whether engagement strategies can go beyond responding to pre-eminent power and enable in altering the structures of the system as desired by emerging powers.

b) To identify if any dominant strategy or a specific combination of strategies emerges as suitable to assess Indo-U.S relations.

By engagement strategies I analyze the various responses that have been discussed by different scholars as options for secondary states to respond to power preponderance like balancing, soft balancing, bandwagoning, omni-enmeshment, hedging (Waltz, 1979; Walt,1987; Wohlforth, 1999; Liber, Alexander,2004; Paul,2005; Pape 2005; Goh,2008).These will be considered as options for India and I will try to make a distinction of how these strategies can be utilized by an emerging power which have definite major power goals. Superpowers despite being most powerful can utilize engagement strategies to states that exhibit opposition or challenge to its primacy or the established system. The United States may apply containment, accommodation or satellization (Liska,1973) or engagement (Resnick,2001) or regional containment (Nayar,Paul,2003) to regional powers. While the engagement strategies of the U.S are to be analyzed as applicable to a single state, engagement strategies of India will be analyzed as means to manage its relation with U.S and its relations with others to forward its indigenous interests. The strategies are compared based on their advantages, disadvantages, costs involved and how they assist India and U.S to engage with each other and forward their niche interests.

The study stresses that these strategies should be analyzed as means to enhance status attribution by emerging powers beyond the aim of managing U.S preponderance. An analysis on similar lines enhances the scope of these strategies and gives a more nuanced understanding of India's engagement policies. The study then proceeds to assess the Indi-U.S relations through the four probable engagement patterns of alliance, entente ad-hoc coalitions and alignment. The study finds that Indo-U.s relations can be most suitably assessed as flexible strategic alignment engagement pattern.

Conclusion

The most significant consequence of the end of the cold war was the rise of the United States as the sole superpower and an international system maintained by it. Parallelly by the end of 1990"s concrete discussions and debates can be observed regarding the role, behavior and capabilities of regional powers as agents of power diffusion in the unipolar structure.(Buzan, Waever,2003;Christensen, 2006; Shambaugh, 2004/2005; Walt,2009). More importantly the deliberations on understanding regional powers through global approach and the attempt to establish indigenous structures elaborates and enhances the parameters of regional powers with global ambitions.(Flemes,2009; Hurell,2007; Destradi,2010). This work positions India as a regional power that is rooted in its major power ambitions with its system altering trait. Understanding regional powers through global nexus modifies the framework of understanding superpower and regional powers. In this framework the regional power is not only dominant in its region but also a contender in attaining major power status in the power hierarchy that the superpower dominates hence engagement strategies of the superpower will no longer be attained by only incentives or containment. Regional powers are balancing the region and its global ambitions hence their engagement strategies are to be understood not only interested in maintaining regional stability and dominion rather motivated towards recognition building, role elevation and status attribution. The strategic imperatives also changed as both the superpower and regional power have nuclear capabilities, vested strategic interdependence and the presence of a greater rival in the region. Understanding the United States and India within the above mentioned aspects help to outline how combinations of contradiction and cooperation can define power asymmetric relations and diverse engagement strategies.

Findings

Indo-U.S relations through systematic understanding and their sense of entitlement

The difference in strategic objectives of the United States and India should be considered in terms of systematic understanding and their sense of entitlement that constructed their respective idea of power and interests. The difference in structural position within the power hierarchy informs how they frame their interests and how they act to promote those. In the

international system, there is no permanency in power positions and all powers have to continuously pursue to maintain and extend their power and influence. Superpowers will indulge in strategies to extend its power and to bring others under its dominion through spheres of influence, thus, regional powers that are ambitious and want to follow autonomous course are to be modified or coaxed to incur compliance. On the other hand, regional power's way to climb the power hierarchy is to attain a major power status and it must increase its capabilities and be able to exercise their influence. Thus, being a compliant follower of the superpower will not serve its purpose of securing higher status with distinct identity. The natural impulse of a superpower is to exercise domination over regional powers and this runs in contradiction to the regional power's impulse of avoiding domination and their thrust for role elevation sets them on a conflictual course.

Added to this inherent element of systematic contradiction is the sense of entitlement of U.S and India that further explains their divergences in thinking. Embedded prominently in the U.S foreign policy is the ideas of exceptionalism and entitlement that U.S is destined to be the world power that can responsibly lead and manage the international order. Since the days following the Second World War, the U.S is determined to structure the international order and in the Post Cold War period, with its emergence as the predominant power, it has taken up the responsibility to construct, protect and preserve a new world order. For India its sense of entitlement is based in its civilizational and cultural heritage that catalyzed its claim to a leadership role in the region and in the international order. It has long believed the international order as a hegemonic one that does not provide the strategic space for accommodation of new powers. While U.S believes its predominance and authority is embedded in its ability to maintain an international order and make others believe in the benefit and stability of such an order, India's entitlement lies in attaining a major power role which it believes is possible by changing the unilateral structure of the present order to a diffused multilateral one. Thus, the formation of strategic interest from their power positions and the sense of entitlement can be key to understanding the inconsistency that often plagues the Indo-U.S relations.

India's position in U.S strategic vision

A combined strategy of Accommodation and Engagement

Since the Bush administration, U.S policies towards India seem to pursue a combined strategy

of accommodation with elements of engagement. The formal recognition and support from the Bush and Obama administrations for India's rise as a global power or its permanent membership in the United National Security Council (UNSC) marks a deviation from the structural dynamics of conflict between a superpower and a regional power. This can be explained by the application of a combined strategy of accommodation and engagement by the superpower towards a rising regional power. The concept of accommodation is taken from George Liska's (1973) typology of policy options for great powers towards middle powers and T.V Paul"s (2016) idea of accommodation of rising powers. By accommodation, Liska (1973) refers to „devolution of regional responsibility to apparently disposed middle powers" and for Paul(2016) accommodation stands for status adjustment and leadership role sharing between established and rising powers through membership and due roles in international institutions and acceptance of spheres of influence. Engagement is considered a strategy in U.S foreign policy. Richard N. Haass and Meghan L. O" Sullivan defines engagement as a foreign policy strategy which depends to a significant degree on positive incentives to achieve its objectives (Haass, Sullivan; 2000:1-2). A mixed strategy of accommodation and engagement seems to suit the purpose whereby through accommodation, the U.S tries to recognize and enhance India's status in the international order and by strategic engagement it provides resources and incentives to influence India in modifying its non- status quo traits.

Element of Absorption

A further element of absorption should be added to the existing strategies of accommodation and engagement. The policy of the U.S seems more inclined towards binding the rising power within its desired perimeters by being accommodative and entwining it in various initiatives or agreements even with minor tweaking to the original version to suit the rising power"s interest but largely designed by the superpower itself. Thus, more than devolution of power to the regional it is about absorption. Absorption is more lucrative as it is not as costly as to maintain continuous engagement through supply of aids or resources and it is not a long term adjustment process like accommodation.

The idea of satellization

The concept of satellization talks about building dependence by assuming interventionist capabilities (Liska, 1973) but here the U.S can be seen offering aid, incentives and even capacity building resources and its strategy is influenced by modification rather than

interventionist. But as India's rise becomes more concerning or threatening to U.S primacy it might develop into interventionist capabilities. Thus, there remains the chance of applying certain elements of the policy of satellization in the U.S engagement strategy towards India if India resorts to being too challenging or threatening to core U.S interests.

India's strategic understanding and the United States

For India, U.S as a superpower is territorially non-threatening, supports India's rise, envisions a central role for India in the region and in global arena, provides it with necessary resources and recognition thus, a partnership with U.S in the present scenario is lucrative and strategic for India's emergence. However, that does not dilute India's differences with American strategic understanding or India's desire to alter the existing international order. Such a balance of divergences and convergences seems to be managed by India by adopting certain engagement strategies.

A combination of engagement strategies of soft balancing and Omni-enmeshment

A combination of soft balancing and omni-enmeshment enables India to manage its relations with U.S and extend its distinct ideas and interests. Soft balancing may occur through diplomatic means of participating in international institutions, economic statecraft and ad hoc diplomatic arrangements (Pape, 2005). "A core purpose of soft balancing is not to coerce or even to impede the superior state"s current actions, but to demonstrate resolve in a manner that signals a commitment to resist the superpower"s future actions (if it becomes threatful)" (Pape,2005:37). While omni-enmeshment refers to the strategy of secondary powers in enmeshing a preponderant power through sustained engagements and exchanges to ensure its deep involvement in the region, to turn the geopolitical reality of great power penetration into the secondary state's benefit by involvement in building strategic cooperation, trade agreements, joint military and naval exercises and retain secondary power's role in shaping and stability of the regional order (Goh, 2008). India as an emerging power wants to attain major power status on its own terms and project its own ideas that often do not resonate with the prevailing norms. India's stress on maintaining strategic autonomy and its protests against the norms and structures of the present international systems renders bandwagoning with U.S difficult. The tacit means of soft balancing and omni-enmeshment enables India to maintain its flexible yet strategic partnership with

U.S, nurture multiple engagements with other powers and most importantly to project its distinct ideas and interests. Omni-enmeshment provides India the opportunity to engage both with US and China and integrate itself with other regional powers enabling it to play a leadership role in shaping the contours of regional order. Soft balancing on the other hand helps India to retain its strategic partnership with the U.S while acting collectively with other developing countries to resist the biases in prevailing international order or construct alternative regional structures.

The Concept of Enabling Engagement Strategies

Broadening the scope of engagement strategies will help us to understand the behavior of non-leading states, beyond responding to threat perception from the dominant power, and focus on the agency of the emerging powers seeking engagements to assert its leadership role and develop its capacity. The study, while dealing with various engagement strategies, has found that strategies like soft balancing or omni enmeshment have the potential to enhance opportunities of emerging powers to respond beyond power preponderance and these have been termed as enabling engagement strategies.

Strategies that help to manage relations with dominant power and promote niche interests and objectives of secondary powers are termed as enabling strategies. These strategies go beyond the threat perception prism and stresses on the reconfigured scope and choice of action that can be available to emerging powers. Engagement strategies like soft balancing and omni-enmeshment can be applied by India beyond responding to U.S and more as means to assert India's role. The means of tacit diplomacy of soft balancing specially entangling diplomacy and economic strengthening will help India to increase its influence and assert its role among other secondary powers. India's active partnership in various regional institutions and regional blocs within larger international institutions like SAARC, ASEAN, BIMSTEC etc. provides India the opportunity to establish its ideas and opinions that will further its influence and acceptability among peer states. Emerging powers like India are working adroitly to transform the existing international order to a more hospitable and inclusive one that accepts the leadership role of new powers. These enabling strategies expand the horizon of the agency of emerging powers like India to accrue benefits from great power relations and extend their own needs, values and interests to carve out a distinct space for themselves within a preferred international order.

Altered response of the superpower in case of rise of more than one power

The successive U.S administrations since President Bush has constructively acknowledged and assisted India's strive to achieve a global power status. From enhancing India's capacity building endeavors from nuclear to defense cooperation, integrating India into international regimes to supporting India's candidature for permanent membership to United Nations Security Council or declaring it as a major defense partner, U.S has positively propelled India's emergence. Such concerted efforts to help an emerging power that seeks transformation in the existing order runs in contradiction to the inherent impulse of a superpower to prevent the rise of new powers with system altering traits.

U.S support to the rise of India can be explained by the proposition that the presence of a more threatening rival will see the superpower assisting the rise of another emerging power that it believes to be comparatively less threatening and still have the capabilities to effectively help it balance the rise of the threatening power. The United States is confronted with a unique situation of emergence of more than one power in a confined region. Its restructured calculations on restraining the rise of new powers are based on degree of threat perception, divergence over political structures and ideological outlooks and the intention towards the international order.[1] In contrast to India, China appears to be an assertive power that aggressively wants to gain influence by territorial and economic claims, practices contrasting political structures and beliefs and offers ideologically and politically alternative norms and values underpinning the current liberal International order. Thus, costs of accommodating China are significantly reduced by the presence of an emerging power like India that also seeks to balance the growing assertiveness of China. In addition, India is perceived as a non-threatening power that duly adheres to most of the ideological ideas of the US led international order and seeks to reform the system rather than turn it over. The U.S is practicing indirect regional containment (Nayar & Paul, 2003) against China by supporting India (the lesser adversary) with capacity building and recognition to posit it as a counter weight in the region.

[1] On accommodation of new powers refer to Chandra, V. (2018). Rising Powers and The Future International Order. *World Affairs: The Journal of International Issues*, *22*(1), 10–23. https://www.jstor.org/stable/48520045, Murray, Michelle, 'Conclusion: Rising Powers and the Future of the International Order', *The Struggle for Recognition in International Relations: Status, Revisionism, and Rising Powers* (New York, 2018; online edn, Oxford Academic, 17 Apr. 2019), https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190878900.003.0008,

Flexible Strategic Alignment as the engagement pattern of Indo-U.S relations

India and the US have identified diverse areas of congruence, defense, and economy to regional and global issues and have made concrete effects to upgrade their relation to a global strategic partnership through strategy and regular high level interactions. Alignment offers collaboration with the intended flexibility to cooperate while retaining their respective space to regulate the degree of commitment.

India U.S alignment constitutes certain specific features making it different from the general perception of alignment. Firstly their alignment is not restricted to specific issue areas but it is a mode of operation that runs the partnership. It is the pattern of engagement that elevates the relationship over time. Secondly their alignment offers multiple levels of negotiations whereby even within a specific issue area they can identify mediated spaces to negotiate respective opinions and strategic interest and thereby reach a mutual understanding on the final contours of an agreement. Thirdly, alignment over diverse issue areas over time has culminated into deeper levels of cooperation, helped them to bridge differences, enhance their understanding of each other's strategic vision and have constructively built confidence and fostered trust. It has incrementally strengthened the partnership. Such a process of alignment that boosts confidence elevates the partnership and can tide over differences can be termed as a cumulative upgrading alignment process.

Indo-U.S partnership can be comprehensively assessed in terms of a flexible strategic alignment. It introduces new features to the general concept of alignment by identifying that alignment is not just a strategy to be chosen to cooperate on certain issues and setting aside disagreements. Alignment can be a pattern of partnership between a superpower and an emerging power that differs significantly over strategic thinking and goals yet are willing to cooperate on common interests and construct a strategic partnership.

Policy Recommendations

The study is aimed at analyzing possible engagement strategies that enable a superpower and regional power to cooperate despite the power asymmetry, divergent strategic thinking and preferences of international order. The relation of India and the U.S is analyzed as case study within such an ambit and the research has yielded certain observations concerning actionable

policy recommendations.

a) The United States and India should continue their alignment by underlining mediated spaces when confronted with differences because their cooperation is essential in realizing core strategic interests at both ends. A multiple goal oriented partnership not restricted by security centric alignment is the way forward in an interdependent international order that has emerging powers with distinct ideas and vision.

b) The United States should continue to bolster Indian power as such an investment presently serves the US interest in retaining a balance against and over Chinese influence in the larger Asian order and comparatively less costly than pursuing a policy of accommodation towards China.

c) The United States should focus on measures to increase American defense inputs to India as the Indo-U.S defense trade is abysmally low in comparison to Indo-Russian defense trade. The US needs to wane India from its dependence on Russian arms imports if it wants closer interoperability and propel India to work within security and strategic parameters in the Indo-Pacific under the American leadership.

d) The United States should further India‟s integration with allies and countries in South East Asia but let India take a leadership role in augmenting relationships to ensure an inclusive regional architecture. The smaller powers of the region are wary of a great power driven strategy as they are balancing both U.S and Chinese presence and will be more acceptable to Indian initiative than the idea of Washington spearheading the process of shaping the regional order.

e) India's requirements for capacity building and most importantly integration into International regimes and structures to enhance its recognition necessitated India to remain strategically viable to American interest and reinforce the incentive for U.S to continue pursuing preferential policies towards India.

f) India needs to understand that its strategic importance to the United States is directly linked to its economic viability. India needs to remain lucrative to U.S companies and markets to enhance trade linkages and bilateral investments.

Future Areas of Research

I. The soft balancing efforts of the emerging powers like India, China or Brazil exhibited by their cooperation in various International forums to protest against the biases of the existing international norms and their efforts to build indigenous regional structures are initiatives directed to balance future threat from U.S power? *Can these initiatives be seen as a result of balance of contradictory interests rather than balance of threat*?

II. The rise of emerging regional powers like India marks a transition of power in the international order. With the rise of new powers the question of accommodation and integration become significant. Whether the presence of partnership through continued engagement is a way forward to peaceful integration of emerging powers by the preponderant power or it is a part of the greater absorption strategy to restrain the rise of new powers by binding them within the preferred parameters dictated by the superpower?

III. Enabling strategies as highlighted in the study as means by which emerging powers can manage their relations with great powers and that enables them to project and forward indigenous interest and objectives can actually contribute towards addition of new ideas within the international structures. Further research can be conducted on whether these engagement strategies enable these states to attain the desired changes in the international order without engaging into a structural conflict with the preponderant power to transform the present system.

Significance of the study

Understanding superpower regional power relations through the prism of engagement strategies enhance the perception of management of convergence and divergences to build partnerships by effectively avoiding the systematic conflict.

The study effectively moves beyond the limitations of analyzing responses of secondary states as only aimed at managing great power relations. Secondary States adopt engagement strategies to construct relations with both great and small powers alike and their engagements are primarily motivated at developing their capacity and enhancing their power and

influence. The study successfully shows that emerging regional powers have considerable power capabilities, can exercise their influence over region and are capable of pursuing a whole range of strategies in continuum and are not restricted by the dichotomy of balancing or bandwagoning.

The study also points to the relevance of the new pattern of international interactions between U.S and emerging regional powers like India where the comparatively lesser powerful state has the agency to resist U.S policies and put forward its own ideas for negotiations and can actually lead to modifications to agreement or policy outcomes. The emerging new powers are asserting and widening the scope of strategic vision by successfully projecting their individual ideas and perceptions thereby redefining the contours of understanding superpower regional power relations.

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